

Achieving and Maintaining Standards Procedure – Performance

Initial Action Manager's Checklist and How To Guide

This stage of the procedure gives the employee a clear opportunity to respond to support offered and resolve under- performance informally. Remember to encourage the employee to be responsible for their own performance and to work with you. If performance issues are resolved at this stage, the formal procedure will not need to be applied. Initial action provides a clear message that performance is becoming an 'issue' which must be addressed.

Examples of what leads to Initial Action:

- Levels of performance are consistently below the required standard. Use the [**Performance Building Blocks**](#) to assist in identifying areas in which the employee is under-performing.
- Repeated quality of work issues: mistakes, errors, omissions have been made by the employee.
- Ongoing issues in relation to pace: deadlines, completion of activities.
- Recurring attitude and behaviour which is not a conduct, disciplinary matter but does affect workload, team, customers, service users.
- Frequent customer, employee or other manager complaints that are upheld and are not a disciplinary matter.

The trigger for initial action is that poor performance continues to fall below the required standard despite the manager exploring this with the employee and identifying practical and supportive ways in which to improve.

If the above is the case, arrange a meeting with the employee to explain your concerns about their underperformance. This is an 'informal' meeting therefore the usual five days notice and right to be accompanied does not apply.

How To Conduct an Initial Action Meeting

- Prepare for the meeting by gathering evidence/examples of under-performance: e.g. meeting notes/examples of poor work/examples of targets or timescales not being met.
- Use [**Sources of Support**](#) to prepare what you are going to say/how you are going to approach the meeting.
- At the meeting, explain the purpose and format (e.g. to discuss concerns about performance; to jointly address how this can be improved; to pull together a plan of what action needs to be taken, including providing support to the employee on how to improve).

- Provide the employee with examples of under – performance so that he/she can clearly see what needs to be improved. If performance has been poor but not addressed in the past, explain that you are drawing a line and setting expectations for future actions.
- Remember to probe for reasons for the underperformance. Is it due to personal circumstances? Is there an underlying medical issue? Is it in relation to understanding of role, lack of support or training?
- Encourage the employee to accept responsibility and engage with you in finding practical solutions which will help them to make improvements in their performance.
- Consider applying the relevant HR Procedure if appropriate: if the reasons are related to: health ([Health and Wellbeing](#)); stress ([Occupational Stress](#)); grievance or harassment ([Fairness at Work](#)); work-life balance ([flexible working procedure](#)).
- Consider whether the poor performance is due to being unable to carry out the work to the required standard or whether the employee is refusing to do this: if the latter, this may be a conduct issue and will be dealt with under the Achieving and Maintaining Standards Procedure- Discipline. *Please note: some issues will initially be considered capability (performance) and become conduct (disciplinary) as the case develops.*
- Develop a [Performance Improvement Plan](#) along with the employee (who should sign and be given a copy of the plan). Discuss and explain what is required from the employee. Include timescales for improvement, depending upon the nature of improvements required (e.g. if an activity is done daily then an improvement could be expected within a few weeks; if monthly then likewise).
- Consider support and development arrangements that will assist the employee to improve.
- Ensure that the employee is clear about what is expected of them – objectives/standards must be SMART. Use the [How To Complete an Improvement Action Plan](#), for ideas of how to develop the plan.
- Try to ensure that the employee takes ownership of the improvements required and is clear about the reasons why they are required.
- E-mail a copy of the plan to Human Resources: HR@Pkc.gov.uk. The employee must be given a copy.
- Arrange the next meeting(s) to review the plan.

If the employee does not improve to the required standard in the time agreed, move to the formal stage of the procedure: [a Performance Hearing](#).